

# **The Naked Bible Podcast 2.0**

**Number 72**

**“Leviticus 8-9”**

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**With**

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**October 25, 2015**

## **Leviticus 8-9**

**Leviticus 8-9 describes two distinct but related ceremonies: the consecration of the altar and Tabernacle, and the consecration of Aaron as High Priest (vv. 6–12) and his sons as priests. This episode focuses on some of the objects worn by the high priest (ephod, gold plate) and the enigmatic Urim and Thummim.**

**TS:** Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 72, Leviticus 8-9. I'm your layman, Trey Stricklin, and he's the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Well Mike? I beat you in fantasy this week.

**MSH:** Yeah you did and it wasn't even really close. I had a terrible week.

**TS:** It was over 65 points, if I can brag a little bit.

**MSH:** You didn't count though, right?

**TS:** Yeah, right, just 65.4 points or something. Who's keeping score?

**MSH:** Yeah I had a terrible week. I'm in four leagues and I can't remember the last time I lost every matchup in every league I was in but it happened this last weekend.

**TS:** I really can't say I feel sorry for you Mike.

**MSH:** I know. I'm not shocked.

**TS:** Well, we're 1-1 because last year you beat me so I've tied it up.

**MSH:** It's early enough in the season we might meet again.

**TS:** That's true. I'm only one game behind you.

**MSH:** Yeah I still have a good record, at least in that league. Yeah and playoffs, who knows what will happen there.

**TS:** Well, nothing goes as good with fantasy football as Leviticus.

**MSH:** Yeah, it was sort of a blood-letting. Nice Segway there, yeah. It was pretty ugly. It's just too bad we're not into skin diseases or something. But that will come. Today we're going to do 8-9. I know last time we said 8-10, but there is enough here. I just sort of felt bad about giving 10 sort of the short shrift, so we'll save 10 for next time. Leviticus 8-9 is today and most of the time, even with those two chapters we'll be in chapter 8. There is something in chapter 9 I want to draw attention to, but there's a bit of repetition in chapter 9 with the sacrifice of material we already covered and that will happen again in Leviticus as we proceed. But 8-9 I think is plenty to talk about.

So just for the sake of kind of structured arrangement most of Leviticus chapter 8 is really devoted to two events, two ceremonies and that is the consecration ceremony of the altar and the tabernacle, basically, the objects that are most concerned with sacred space in the sacrificial system. So consecrating them, getting them ready to be used, purging them of impurity so they can be used and then also consecrating Aaron, the high priest and his sons as priests. So basically everything that's relevant to the sacrificial system and every person that's going to be sort of officiating and carry out the duties, they have to be individually and collectively sanctified or consecrated, purged of impurity. And so that's why you get references

in these two chapters to some of the offerings, the sacrifices and offerings we've talked about up to this point.

So this in chapter 8 takes place over the period of seven days, and then in chapter 9 we have an eighth day, there's a ritual on the eighth day, and that is sort of a catchall ceremony to make sure that the entire newly consecrated tabernacle is ready to go and then there's the celebration of the entry of God's presence, the glory cloud, the *kavod*. *Kavod* is the Hebrew word for cloud that takes up residence in the tabernacle and so that's the eighth day celebration. So, it was on the eighth day that the tabernacle altar itself is used for the first time in the performance of the sacrificial ritual. Prior to this, the previous seven days that their animals are being slain and then blood being sprinkled on the altar itself to purge it of impurity to ready it for use, but it's actual first use is only in chapter 9.

So that's basically what the two chapters cover and the logic is when you welcome the presence of God into the tabernacle, you have to be extremely careful that everything and everybody has been purged from impurity so that the presence of God is not polluted, if we can use these terms. And so the priest and the people on these occasions, they're going to be offering the offerings and sacrifices that need to be offered to make sure that everything is ready and set to go that we sort of talked about prior. So after all that's done, then you get chapter 10, which we're going to reserve for next time in the next episode. Chapter 10 is the chapter where you get Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, they're struck down by God for offering "strange fire." And the whole point of what happens there in chapter 10 really needs to be set against the backdrop of 8-9 because they are a living and basically a dead object lesson as to the seriousness of keeping everything the way it should be and observing all these rules about being fit to enter sacred space and to offer what needs to be offered in the proper way at the proper time and all that sort of stuff.

So Aaron loses two sons basically to make the point that God's actually serious about this. You're supposed to learn these lessons about sacred space and approaching God and making sure that God's purity is never polluted and all that sort of thing. So we'll leave chapter 10 for next time but I think it's worth pointing out here that needs to be understood against the backdrop of these earlier two chapters, the consecration ceremonies for the people and the things that are going to be used in the whole system. Now we're going to jump into chapter 8 here, so let me just go to Leviticus 8 because I'm not going to be reading through the entirety of both chapters but a few sections and then just stopping along the way and commenting about a few things that I think are interesting. So in chapter 8, we read,

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, <sup>2</sup>“Take Aaron and his sons with him, and the garments and the anointing oil and the bull of the sin offering and the two rams and the basket of unleavened bread. <sup>3</sup> And assemble all the congregation at the entrance of the tent of meeting.” <sup>4</sup> And Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the congregation was assembled at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

**MSH:** Now, there's a lot of people here so it's worth commenting about, well, how do you get them all at the tent of meeting? What does that mean? Rather than overly literalize this, the actual place of assembly for the people was the outer section of the courtyard. It's not that everybody had to be right in front of the tent because there just isn't space for that. And we're

going to talk a little bit about the logistics of sacred space in this episode because they're just some things that happen basically because the system is what it is because it has to serve the whole population of the Israelite nation but yet, there's this limited space when you're talking about the tabernacle.

So how does that work? There are some concessions that have means and some rules that have to be put in place. But in this instance when the chapter starts out, they're basically in the courtyard area, and according to the procedures given in Leviticus, it was forbidden for anybody except priests, and the priests are about to be consecrated, but no one but priests advanced beyond the altar of burnt offerings. I can't visually give you a depiction here in the podcast of the layout of the tabernacle. But you might want to pull one up online or something like that just so you can see what I'm talking about here. But if you were not a priest, you could not advance beyond the altar of burnt offerings. That was off-limits, sacred space that can only be occupied by someone Yahweh had chosen to serve him in that capacity and then that person had to do the right set of offerings we've talked about up to this point so that sacred space is not polluted or profaned by that person.

So, basically, it was an area. The courtyard is about halfway between the outer gate, the entrance to the tabernacle proper. And without getting into it because we're not doing Exodus. If we were doing a podcast on Exodus 25-40, we could talk about how the colors, how the materials used to construct the tent proper and then the sections of the tent actually denoted gradations of sanctity in terms of the metals progressing all the way up to gold, fine gold, that was reserved for the innermost part of the holy of holies. The higher gradation of metals as you moved into the complex was a sign. It's a symbol of sanctity, a symbol of importance or value. The closer you got to the actual presence of God, the more expensive, the more valuable the material was.

These were just object lessons. God is not like Donald Trump here. That isn't the point. Look at all the expensive stuff God has. God owns everything, so there's no point to that, but the point is that the materials that were used were supposed to inform the person working in there and the people because they know what's going on. They see the thing constructed. They know what it's made of, and of course, they teach people that, too, their children these sorts of things that the lesson was the presence of God was something so significant, so important that you had use materials that were increasing in value as you move toward him. So I think that's sufficient. That's all we really need to say about that because we're not in Exodus 25-40. It was still an important teaching point so I wanted to say something about that, but I don't want to get distracted by it either. So in verse 5,

<sup>5</sup> And Moses said to the congregation, "This is the thing that the LORD has commanded to be done."<sup>6</sup> And Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed them with water.

**MSH:** This is a very familiar act done with any priestly system in the ANE using water as a symbolic gesture or act of removing impurity because just in the language of life experience, this is how you cleaned things. They don't have the fancy chemicals we have today. If you wanted to clean something, you used water. So that's what they're doing here. And it's kind of interesting but if you look at the usage in the Hebrew Bible of the verb used here, to wash, *rachats*, is the lemma here. It typically, really basically, always refers to the washing of hands and feet. So what

we have here is Aaron and his sons are brought there. Their hands and their feet are washed. You'll notice there's no mention in that verse Moses brought Aaron and his sons and washed with water.

Then he puts the coat on him and ties the sash around the waist. That's when you get the description of what the high priest is wearing, the ephod, the band around the waist, the breastplate, the Urim and Thummim, we're going to talk about all this stuff today, the turbine on the head, all at stuff. There's no mention of sandals so it's kind of curious. I just think it's worth pointing out that *rachats* is when you wash the hands and feet because those are the two things that matter in sacred space. The hands matter because they're going to touch objects that have been "made" holy or sanctified to the Lord. We've talked about some of these things already in previous episodes. And so the act of washing the hand because the hand is what is going to be touching objects. The hands need to be purified so this was a ritual act that denoted this person now is fit to touch holy objects because he's undertaken this ritual. The feet are important because you're going to walk on holy ground.

This is actually consistent with other passages like Exodus 3, the burning bush, Joshua 5, the captain of the lord's host when they're told to take off your sandals because you're standing on holy ground. The priests actually did what they did barefoot and their feet were washed in a ritual act to denote that now your feet have been purged of impurity and you can walk on sacred space. So the priest would go around barefoot doing whatever they needed to do when their feet and their hands were cleansed making them fit to do whatever it was they needed to do. So let's read verses 7-9 to get the full description here of what the priests are. I'm not going to talk about every element because there's some that are just more interesting than others. In verse 7, we see,

<sup>7</sup> And he put the coat on him and tied the sash around his waist and clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him and tied the skillfully woven band of the ephod around him, binding it to him with the band. <sup>8</sup> And he placed the breastpiece on him, and in the breastpiece he put the Urim and the Thummim. <sup>9</sup> And he set the turban on his head, and on the turban, in front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown, as the LORD commanded Moses.

**MSH:** Now, this stuff is describing in Exodus, Exodus 28, Exodus 29, what the high priestly garments and the garments for the other priests as well. But I just wanted to say a few things about some of these things, especially the Urim and the Thummim because I get questions about this all the time. It's kind of an interesting topic because it deals with divination and whatnot. But the ephod, urim and thummim are the most interesting objects here. So the high priest has to wear a linen tunic and that gets tied with the sash and he has to put a robe on top of that. And then the ephod was worn over all that. Now the robe that the ephod fits over, according to Exodus 28, was made of purple wool and it had golden bells attached to it. Between each bell there was a pomegranate.

That's in Exodus 28:34 and Exodus 39:26. And I think that's interesting because you don't actually see this in the Old Testament but there are Second Temple sources and rabbinic sources, I wanted to say rabbinic speculations, about why the bells were there and what purpose they served. And I think that there is a practical possibility here, let's just call it a possibility because you don't actually have an example of this historically, either in the Old Testament or

not. But you'll actually read of speculations like when the high priest, especially at the Day of Atonement when he actually went in before the Ark of the Covenant. He entered the Most Holy place. Since he's the one wearing the bells here, this robe that has the bells sewn at the bottom, that was so that people could hear that he was moving around and that he was still alive. And you'll read rabbinic sort of speculations about tying a rope around his leg because someone figured out well, if God kills him, if he does something wrong, if he's impure and God strikes him down, how do we get them out?

And so you'd tie a rope around his leg. If the bells stop ringing then there might be a problem. There might be trouble, that sort of thing. There's no actual instance of that, either in the Old Testament or other ancient sources but you will read about this kind of speculation, kind of a hey, maybe we should do this or someone will allude to the fact that it was done but nothing ever happen. How do you validate that historically? Well, I guess you can't in one sense but just in terms of a practical sort of solution to a problem that could come up in somebody's mind, well, because of Nadab and Abihu like in the Leviticus 10, what if this happens to the high priest? How do we get him out? We can't just go in there. And if he's in the holy of holies, even the priests, no priest is going to say yeah, I'll go in and get him because he could get struck dead, too. So as a practical consideration, yeah, maybe this is why the bells were there. Maybe they did tie a rope around his ankle or something.

You'll see that reference, you'll see this problem alluded to but you don't actually have an incident of it. It's kind of interesting. Now the ephod itself I find interesting because it's made of wool, if you go back Exodus, the chapters that describe its constitutions, made of wool and linen and it has gold threads woven into the fabric, so much so that it has a golden appearance. Now the reason I mention this, sort of the amount of gold I'm hinting at something here, is that elsewhere in the Old Testament you will see people like David call for the ephod to be brought to them. You'll see Gideon he "sets up an ephod in Judges 8:7 in his hometown. He either makes a replica of this or it that has something to do with divination, with asking God questions for the will of God and that sort of thing because in the high priest ephod, you had the Urim and Thummim in this pouch that was on the breast piece and that's what the high priest would use to get knowledge from God.

So there are other passages that either that specific ephod is used via a high priest or some priest to ask questions of God or you have somebody like Gideon who might have sort made his own. And the question is well, that's just kind of odd. Why are you asking for like a garment to be brought up and how do you "setup" a garment? This has led to some speculations. Some people say well maybe they're just using the term ephod for a statue, like Gideon made a statue or an idol or something because Gideon by this time in Judges 8 really isn't a good guy. Maybe that's what's going on. Others suggest well maybe they made a statue and they clothed it. They put clothes on it so it would look like the high priest and then that was brought out, something like that. There's another possibility here. If there was enough gold in this thing and if it was the actually ephod or an exact replica, there is the possibility that it could've stood on its own. It could have supported its own weight because of the gold in it and it would've sort of held the fabric firm and you could move it around and stand it erect. Who knows? We're not specifically told.

It's just that this same term, the ephod, is used in these contexts, especially Gideon. The issue with the Levite later in the book of Judges, his name is Micah, he's not really the high priest and yet he has this ephod and he uses it. So you have these situations where they're using

something and something is moved around, something is brought to them and put back that has something to do with the way the actually ephod functioned. The high priest would've been wearing this thing and would have had the Urim and Thummim inside of it. So there's some apparent attempt to either use that actual object or to make something like it to use for divination, to get knowledge from God on the part of other people. So it's speculation. We're not specifically told but those are the possibilities. While we're at it, let's talk a little bit about the Urim and Thummim that's mentioned in verse 8. This is really, I don't know. Somebody should just make a Twilight Zone episode out of the Urim and Thummim because there's just all sorts of interesting possibilities here.

So we have in verse 8 Moses places the breast piece on Aaron and in the breast piece he puts the Urim and Thummim. What are these things? There's two of them, these two objects. What are they? Now the meanings of Urim and Thummim, even that's not completely clear. They're apparently stone objects and the question is, there's a number of questions about them, but the first question is, what shape were they in? Were they flat or fairly flat stones like on one side? And that question is raised because in Mesopotamia, there are similar objects used to cast lots. Now you say why are we talking about casting lots with the Urim and Thummim? In passages like 1 Samuel 14 where the Urim and Thummim are brought out, this is the episode where Saul makes this stupid vow about nobody can eat anything until this battle's won. Jonathan, his son, doesn't hear it and Saul's like anybody who'd eats anything is going to be put to death. And so Jonathan is the hero of the battle but he has some honey on the battlefield because he was exhausted. And he comes back and this is found out so Saul is put in the awkward position of having to execute the guy responsible for winning the battle. And, of course, they don't do that.

The people basically protect Jonathan in protest of the whole thing. Basically, this was a dumb thing to say. But while Saul is trying to figure out what's going on here, who's the guilty party because he hears about this, they bring out the Urim and Thummim and it's actually said that they are cast. They are thrown down in the Hebrew text. And so the speculation is that well, maybe they were flat on one side and so they would land either one side or the other because you have this casting lot terminology associated with the Urim and Thummim. Now if that's the case, if the Urim and Thummim were like flat, flat stones where they could be on one side or the other, in other words, they couldn't stand on edge if you threw them, then the view is that well, there must've been something on them that elicited either a yes or no response, a positive or negative response. And so some scholars believe that the Urim and Thummim were designed specifically for yes and no questions of God. Now if that's the case, the word Thummim, in Hebrew *tummim*, has a fairly apparent meaning because it would be from the Hebrew adjective *tom*, which means to be complete or to be innocent. Urim therefore, if we have this polar oppositional idea, Urim, which is *Alef-Vav-Resh-Yod-Mem* and then the M(em) at the end is the plural, could come from the Hebrew lemma *arar-aleph-resh*, which means to curse. So you could have on the face of one side of the stone the word for curse and on the other side of the stone the word for innocent, which would sort of by extension be yes and no.

You have to be careful what question you were asking and then you threw them. And so the idea was whatever side comes up that's what God is telling us, cursed or innocent, yes or no. You have to think about the way you wanted to ask the question. Now this is just a theory. Obviously if you track it with me, it raises the question, well, what happened if you throw the two things down and then opposite sides both show up? You have the yes and no both show,



then what do you do? There's actually an instance in the Septuagint that gives us a little glimpse into this that there might be something to this theory. So I'm going to read from either Milgram or Levine, I can't remember which at this point but one of them says, there's a classic instance of the use of the Urim and Thummim preserved in 1 Samuel 14, which I've already alluded to. King Saul's orders have been disobeyed. In order to discover the guilty parties, he has recourse to the oracular inquiry of God. So hoping that his son Jonathan will not be identified, when it sort of gets down to Jonathan being a possibility, the Septuagint version of this story has Saul saying to the Lord, show the Thummim. In other words, show the *tom* side, show the innocent side because that's going to clear Jonathan. So in the Septuagint, you get this statement by Saul. He says,

<sup>41</sup> Therefore Saul said, "O LORD God of Israel, why have you not answered your servant this day? If this guilt is in me or in Jonathan my son, O LORD, God of Israel, give Urim. But if this guilt is in your people Israel, give Thummim." And Jonathan and Saul were taken, but the people escaped. <sup>42</sup> Then Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and my son Jonathan." And Jonathan was taken.

**MSH:** Then, of course, it turns up to be Jonathan. Well, look at what Saul says, why have you not responded to your servant? This is in the Septuagint. You're not going to get it in the Masoretic Text. The speculation here is, because Saul asks for the Tummim side, some scholars will say look, here's an indication that on one side was innocent, other side was cursed, yes-no kind of questions. And since Saul has to say why haven't you answered, the speculation is that he had thrown them a number of times and he got one of each to show up and Saul's getting a little frustrated, so he's like come on. Give us an answer here and then it turns out to be something against him.

That's how the Septuagint has it. It's the Septuagint that actually adds information that you don't get in the traditional Masoretic Text. But it sort of goes hand-in-hand with this idea that the Urim and Thummim were stones that were flat so that you would get one or the other when you threw them out, when you cast them, kind of like flipping a coin, heads or tails, that sort of thing. So maybe that's the case. Maybe it isn't. Who knows? There are some problems with it even though it sort of works or it sort of could work. Milgram points out that there are some issues here. There's some problems. So he says, even if the Septuagint represents the correct story, the correct text, the theory would not allow for an inconclusive answer. You'd have to keep throwing the things, which to Milgram, just doesn't feel right. He says, also it wouldn't explained the plural forms of Urim and Thummim. Why not just have *ur* or *arar*, curse and *tom* for innocent?

Why the plural, why the plural word? It doesn't make any sense if it's just a yes or no possibility. And Milgram adds, above all, it would not explain how the Oracle was able to give more than yes and no answers because that does happen. In Judges 1:1-2, Judges 1, Judges 18, 1 Samuel 10:22, 2 Samuel 2, the beginning of the chapter and in 2 Samuel 5, you have incidents that involve David, Saul, David a couple of times actually and then the people of Israel at the beginning of Judges. Judges 18 would be the other Levite. You have them inquiring of God. Some of these, in fact maybe all of them, don't actually say that the Urim and Thummim were brought out when the question was asked but the same formulaic language to inquire of God,

*shaal*, to ask of God, that is used with the Urim and Thummim episodes, shows up in these instances and the answers to the questions are just beyond yes and no possibilities. You actually get sort of full answers. For instance, the one in 2 Samuel 5, David inquired of the Lord, this is 2 Samuel 5:23-24,

<sup>23</sup> And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, “You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees.

<sup>24</sup> And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then rouse yourself, for then the LORD has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.”

**MSH:** That is way beyond yes, go up, no, don't go up. So how in the world were the Urim and Thummim, if it's a stone with two flat sides and one's yes, one's no, one's curse, one's innocent. How in the world do you get a fully developed answer like that, and these other passages have similar things in them that are just more fully developed answers. How do you get that with just a yes or no possibility with a two-sided Urim and Thummim? So Milgram's not the only one to point this out that you got kind of a problem here. It just doesn't work in these instances under the assumption that to inquire of the Lord means to go get the priest, bring the ephod, get out the Urim and Thummim and cast those babies down and then we'll find out what God wants us to do. So that's the assumption.

Now this has led to a second possibility or at least a second theory. Some scholars have argued, I'm going to throw in a third, too, because it's one I heard in Bible college that always makes me chuckle, but that's a freebie. The second serious one is that some scholars argue that the Urim and Thummim were not flat, that they were actually sort of square shaped like dice. They had more than two sides. They had multiple sides and that on those sides were the letters, the 22 letters, of the Hebrew alphabet. Now, I should say maybe not all 22 but maybe most of them or something like that. Here's the logic. Since Hebrew is a Semitic language and most words, most lemmas, lemma is the basic dictionary spelling of the word, like if you wanted to look up the word running in an English dictionary, you won't find running, you'll find run though. You'll find the base form of the word. In Hebrew the base form of words are typically overwhelmingly spelled with only three consonants.

It's a trilateral language, a trilateral language. So most of the words in the language are going to only have three letters, and so you could fit enough of the alphabet on a multisided object to account for a lot of the vocabulary in Hebrew. That's the theory. You might think, boy that just sounds kind of weird. Wait until you hear number three. Let's just use dice. Dice we use now as an illustration has six sides. So let's say you had two of these, 12 sides, and you put 12 letters of the Hebrew alphabet on it. You're missing 10, but let's just say you put 12, maybe like the beginning constant for each tribe or something like that. And now you get two dice and whatever two sides, when you throw the things, they land face-up. You take those two and you throw another one and you get your third consonant and now you've got your first word. Or you keep throwing them and you just write out the consonants and then it's the priest job to take all those letters and figure out what God's trying to say, which ones sort of make words. It's kind of an odd theory but this is a theory that's actually talked about in the literature.

If you can't, if the priest couldn't make sense of it, then that would be interpreted as God's silence so on the surface, it sounds like it has little bit of logic to it because a lot of people

just don't prefer the two-sided option because you get answers that really kind of long, kind of complicated. Who knows? If you think that's bizarre, here's the third theory. I heard this in Bible college and it always makes me chuckle. The third suggestion is that the Urim and Thummim weren't used in those instances that give longer answers. What was used was the breast piece because that's also part of the ephod. And on the breast piece you'll recall you have these 12 stones and on the stones were written the names of the tribes of Israel. And so the theory here is that when you asked God a question that involves more than a yes or no answer, that the stones. I can't help it. I'm chuckling here.

We used to call this the blinking light theory in Bible college. The stones would light up and then the priest would write down the consonants on that stone, and whatever stones lit up, those are the ones you'd write down. And then you have to figure out what the message is. Do you like that? If you like that better than the other two, congratulations. Nobody really knows precisely what the Urim and Thummin were and how this worked. The only real indication you get is 1 Samuel 14 when they are cast. So there must've been some sort of casting thing, casting act going on. There you have it. So every time someone inquires of the Lord, do we assume it's Urim and Thummim when they're not actually mentioned? Some say yes, some say no. Those who say no say maybe it was the breast pieces or the ephod itself or who knows what's going on. That's the honest answer.

You can come up with ideas as to how this might've worked and for yes and no questions it works kind of well. For the ones that go beyond yes and no, who knows? I've just given you the speculation so if you find any of those entertaining, good because years after I heard the blinking light theory, I still love it. It just makes me chuckle every time. Let's go to verse 9, the headdress. I want to say something about this. You have the high priest wearing a turban and in the front there's this golden plate, the holy crown as the Lord commanded Moses. Now we're told elsewhere in Exodus that on this plate were engraved the words *Kodesh L'Adonai*, *Kodesh la* and then the divine name. It means holy to the Lord or sacred to the Lord, to Yahweh. And this indicated that the high priest himself as a sanctified individual was the one that could enter the Most Holy place and he represented the nation. In Ezekiel 28:38, you have this reference to this idea that the high priest represents the entire nation. I'll just read it to you. It says,

<sup>38</sup> It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear any guilt from the holy things that the people of Israel consecrate as their holy gifts. It shall regularly be on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

**MSH:** So this just marked visually that the high priest was the representative of the entire people. This was especially seen on the Day of Atonement because he's the only one who could go into the Most Holy place before the Ark of the Covenant. Most listeners are going to be familiar with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement ceremony, at least in that respect. So I think this is kind of interesting because it's a very sort of literal bearing of the sacred name. One individual actually wears the name. He bears the name of Yahweh but do you realize that in a more abstract sense, every Israelite bore the name. Every Israelite carried the name in an abstract sense. You say what are you talking about? Well, this is something that often isn't realized but in Exodus 20, this of the 10 Commandments, verse 7 says,

<sup>7</sup>“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

**MSH:** The word take there, you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, is *nasa*. It's the same word for to lift up or carry or bear. So the command doesn't actually refer to verbal swearing. It refers to bearing the name not in vain, not emptily, not uselessly, not worthlessly. And what does bearing the name mean? Bearing the name means you are sort of owned by God. You are God's people. He is the name. Think back to lots of the things I've have done on the blog, the chapters in the Unseen Realm about the name theology of the Old Testament. Every Israelite was warned do not represent God, the true God, all these other nations, they're doing their own thing with their other gods that God allotted to them, Deuteronomy 32 worldview. You people you represent the true God. You bear the name and do not bear it lightly. Don't bear it worthlessly. Don't represent it poorly is the idea. This idea carries into the New Testament. Paul says the Timothy, let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity. You represent Yahweh Israelite.

And Paul's saying you represent Jesus, Christian, Christians. The name of the Christ attaches to his followers. This is representation, this is imaging. This is divine imaging to sort of really cast with a different term. Now it's bearing the name. It is the same idea. It's representing God. And interestingly enough, when you get to the book of Revelation, the whole thing about 666, the name of the beast? Unbelievers are marked with the name of the beast. They bear that name and believers and the 144,000 and all that, they are marked with the name of God, the name of Jesus. It's this abstract idea of representation and ownership, imaging and ownership. That's what was conveyed with this idea with the high priest. With him, it's done explicitly and literally, literally engraved on his forehead on this band, this gold band holy to the Lord, sanctified to the Lord. Remember back in earlier episodes of the podcast, we talk about what it meant to be consecrated or sanctified. It was something that was set aside for specific and exclusive use by God.

And so the high priest is set aside for very specific use, by God for very specific circumstances and represents the people but the people themselves in the law are told to not bear the name worthlessly, carelessly. I just think it's a really good object lesson that kind of ties together or least advances, that's probably a better way of saying it, advances the idea of divine imaging for believers. Because every human images God, every human is God's representative on some level, on a very broad level. When it comes the believers, especially post-Babel, post Deuteronomy 32 worldview, post the time when God disinherits the nations and allots the nations the other gods and lots those gods to other nations, then imaging God takes on a new meaning. It is alignment with the true God, with Yahweh. It is representing the true God, Yahweh, bearing his name in distinction from and to distinguish you from all other peoples and all other gods and it carries right into the New Testament. So I think it's a really interesting feature here, just sort of a thing that we see in passing here Leviticus 8 that's really worth pointing out.

In verse 10, Moses takes the anointing oil, anoints the tabernacle and all that was in it and consecrates them. I want to say something about a little bit later when we transition into chapter 9. We get down to verses 14 and following. This is the section where the altar is cleansed where we have the altar atoned for. The altars don't sin. This isn't moral sinning. This is, if you remember back to earlier episodes, this is purging from impurity, purging from infection. This is

disinfecting things. So you have Aaron and his sons, the priests and the altar, this is just how it's done. So in verses 14 on toward the end of the chapter, you have these procedures, the sprinkling, the pouring of the blood on different objects to disinfect them, to ready them for use. Verse 22, that's kind of interesting. This is when, I'll just read it.

<sup>22</sup> Then he presented the other ram, the ram of ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on the head of the ram. <sup>23</sup> And he killed it, and Moses took some of its blood and put it on the lobe of Aaron's right ear and on the thumb of his right hand and on the big toe of his right foot. <sup>24</sup> Then he presented Aaron's sons, and Moses put some of the blood on the lobes of their right ears and on the thumbs of their right hands and on the big toes of their right feet. And Moses threw the blood against the sides of the altar.

**MSH:** The extremities, the human extremities, the ear the thumb, the toe, the person is literally being purged and purified and sanctified and consecrated from head to foot is the point. We've washed the hands and feet because the hands are going to go be working with sacred objects and the feet are going to be walking on holy ground. But now the blood is applied to the priest and Aaron's sons, head to foot, basically saying that their entire body now has been disinfected and is now made fit for occupying sacred space. And you get to verse 24, Moses put some of the blood on the sons of Aaron's ears and the toes and all that, and he threw the blood, the rest of the blood against the sides of the altar. That's kind of interesting because when the remainder the blood taken from the ram of ordination, as it's called, is cast on the altar, that is actually an analogy, that act is an analogy to what occurred back in Exodus 24 in the enactment of the Sinai Covenant.

Now back then, part of the blood that was cast upon the altar and that represented God as one of the parties of the covenant and the rest of the blood was sprinkled and cast, flung over the people who were the other party of the covenant. The ordination of the priests here, it sort of has a dual function. It purifies the priests who represent the people and also binds them in a covenant relationship, the priests in this case to serve God in his tabernacle on sacred space in relation to the carrying out of the law and when the law is violated to bring people back into a right standing through the sacrificial system. So you have this analogy back to the Sinai ritual in this particular act. Now one more thing I want to mention here is in chapter 9. The end of chapter 8 starts talking about the tent of meeting, mentions it briefly, and then chapter 9, we pick up with tent of meeting again and that phrase is going to become important here because there is something about it that I think is interesting.

In chapter 9, we get this eighth day ritual for sanctifying the whole system essentially, the altar and the tabernacle itself. That happened on the eighth day. Tabernacle altar's actually used and now the whole system basically is now in place after this ritual. It's kind of interesting, at least to me anyway. If you've ever read, this is going to sound like it's really coming out of left field, like it has nothing to do with this. But if you've ever read anything about JEDP, the authorship of the Pentateuch in the four separate sources, one of the arguments to divide the Pentateuch up into sources is variation in vocabulary, and typically what we associate with that is differences in divine name, Yahweh versus Elohim, and that was one of the things that lead

people to speculate, well, why isn't it one name? Why do we have these two names, Yahweh names and El names?

That must be two different sources. Then we get J and E, Jehovah and Elohim. But the discussion of differences in vocabulary is actually much bigger than that and one of the issues is why do we have a word like tabernacle, *mishkan*, for the tent? And then we have *ohel moed*, the tent of meeting? Why not just have one, either call it a *mishkan* or call it the *ohel moed*. Why do we have two? Critics thought that indicates two sources. Well, it's actually fairly easy to show that is a misguided understanding, at least with these two terms, *mishkan* and *ohel moed*. If you actually do some searching for both of these terms, *mishkan*, tabernacle, and *ohel moed*, tent of meeting, you find something interesting. In the case of *mishkan*, the tabernacle, that term is used a lot in the book of Exodus, almost 60 times. But in Leviticus, it only occurs four times. When you get *mishkan*, it begins to be used in Exodus sort of where you'd expect it, from chapter 25 onward because that's when the tabernacle's being built. You might ask yourself, ok, they built a tabernacle in Exodus 25-40, got that.

And so then it's ready to be used. So naturally we would expect Leviticus, the sacrificial system, to be talking about the tabernacle all the time but guess what, it doesn't. It uses of the term *mishkan* tabernacle only four times in the entire book of Leviticus. Instead, what you get in Leviticus is you get the other phrase, the *ohel moed*. So in 62 occurrences, in terms of sort of a collective between these books of the tent of meeting, when it comes to Leviticus, you have a concentration of the tent of meeting terminology in Leviticus as opposed to the tabernacle in Exodus, why? Think about it. Even though you have tent of meeting show up in Exodus, that term is only, is basically, almost exclusively the term you get in Leviticus where as in the other term, it's sort of flipped. What makes the difference? What makes Leviticus different than Exodus 25-40? Why does Leviticus favor tent of meeting and not tabernacle? The reason is what we just read, Leviticus 8 and here in Leviticus 9.

The tabernacle has to be sanctified and the priests have to be sanctified in order for God to meet people there. And so once that happens, the tent of meeting, the meeting language takes over in Leviticus because now this tabernacle thing that we were talking about in Exodus now we're not going to use that terminology. Now we're going to talk about that structure as the place where God meets with people, meets with his people through the priesthood. So after you get this sanctification ritual, it sort of reflected in the way that term is used in the book of Leviticus. It is one of these sorts of vocabulary situations that telegraph a certain theological message. There's nothing wrong with the word tabernacle but now that it's in place, now that it's been sanctified, now that the system is in place, this is the place where God meets with us. And so it just telegraphs to people what's going on, and of course, to readers, telegraphs us what's going on. So to wrap up here, just a few thoughts that I think we can get out of Leviticus 8-9. Think about the necessity of the priesthood.

Now you say well, the priests represent the people but wouldn't it be nice if the people had direct access to God like we do? Well, they don't. We've talked about this before and we see now that there is a sort of logistic reason for this, too. You have to have a priesthood because the tabernacle's only so large and the amount of a sacred space is only so large. You can't just have everybody there so there's a logistic reason why access to God is restricted to only a handful of people. Think about the way a Jew in Jesus' day would've thought of this. That whole system, that whole necessity, probably a better way of saying it, is gone because the same presence that made the space sacred back in Leviticus now dwells in honest and we all have access to God.

There is no restriction of sacred space. There's no need for it either on a spiritual level, a theological level or a physical level. There's just no need for it. So we have a situation where God dwelt among his people in the Old Testament but he wasn't in them like we have in the New Testament. That's actually, that whole situation where God wasn't indwelling is going to necessitate the New Covenant because without that, you only have, I hate to say it this way, but you only have occasional contact with the presence of God, and even then, it's through the priesthood.

And that just isn't going to cut it when it comes to sort of combating human nature, our propensity and our willingness to sin. So part of the new covenant is the coming of the Spirit and the Spirit takes up residence in the believer. That's not something that was going on. That wasn't common in the Old Testament. You had an entirely different setup. And lastly, think about divine knowledge, and we spent a lot of time on the Urim and Thummim in this episode. You had to go to the priests to get answers to a whole variety of questions, why? There's no Bible and frankly there's very little torah, even if you accept mosaic authorship for every word, this is the book of Leviticus. We're here at Sinai. Going with mosaic authorship, they spend 13 months at Sinai building the tabernacle, getting the clothes for the priest, sanctifying the whole system and then they take off and go to the promise land after all this ritual stuff is done. They're there for 13 months and if Moses is busy writing, you still then only got a very small portion and even what you have is about the law, about the priest, about the tabernacle. You don't have any information from God really to direct you in all sorts of ways.

This is why if you think back to the episode with Moses and Jethro, Moses had to spend his day answering questions and Jethro says this isn't really a good use of your time. You need to appoint elders to help you out. Of course, Moses does that. They don't have Scripture. They don't have revelation. What that means is, they do not have access to divine knowledge. The average person didn't have any of that. It's so much superior in the New Testament context compared to the old, and we probably never even thought of that particular way, that that particular setting for why it's just better now. So we should be thankful and frankly, even in light of our Urim and Thummim discussion, even what they did get from the Urim and Thummim, that had an element of uncertainty. Did we pick the right words? Is the words right? Did we spell it right? Is it a yes or no? Is it not?

Even that was sort of an imperfect process or an imprecise process, or maybe a better way to say it, one that just had this element of uncertainty and subjectivity to it, because of the way knowledge was dispensed through the priesthood. It's going to get better with the prophets. God's going to speak to them more often. And he does speak to Moses that Moses is going to die. He does speak to Joshua, and Joshua is going to die. You get the period of Judges and the whole thing sort of blows up. And what you're left with is what we just described, a very sort of uncertain process with an element of subjectivity in it to know what God is thinking, to know he wants us to do. Well, what we have today is just so much better, so we can learn comparative things like that just by paying attention what's going on in Leviticus 8-9 and looking at them in their context.